

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
Buffy Wicks, Chair  
AB 1890 (Aguiar-Curry) – As Amended March 10, 2026

Policy Committee: Housing and Community Development      Vote: 12 - 0

Urgency: No      State Mandated Local Program: No      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill increases the amount of annual matching funds the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) awards to the Napa County Housing Authority (NCHA) for the operation of its farmworker centers from up to \$250,000 to up to \$500,000. The bill specifies the increase is not operative until funding is appropriated the annual Budget Act.

The bill prohibits NCHA from using this funding to house H-2A Visa program workers.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Ongoing annual General Fund cost pressures of up to \$250,000 to provide the increase in matching funds to NCHA to assist with the financing, maintenance, and operation of Napa County's farmworker centers.

The author is requesting additional funding in the 2026-27 state budget to cover the increase.

- 2) HCD anticipates minor and absorbable administrative costs resulting from this change.

Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

NCHA farmworker centers are a model for partnerships between employers, government and workers, with subsidies provided by the county and self-assessments on farmers. They provide an important resource by offering low-cost housing and support services for agricultural workers in a region with severe housing shortages. [This bill] builds on the framework established under AB 317 by extending and increasing the state's authorized matching funds, addressing rising operating costs and supporting the continued operation of these centers.

**Background. Napa County Farmworker Centers.** Napa County's economy is based largely on its \$1 billion agriculture industry, the value of which arises almost exclusively from its wine grape crops. To address the housing needs of its farmworker workforce, Napa County

operates three farmworker centers, totaling 180 beds, serving an average of 400 farmworkers during the eleven months of the year that each is open. Housing consists of dorm-style accommodations with two renters per room, and lodgers receive food, hot showers, laundry facilities, a library, and internet access on-site.

In comparison, the 24 state-owned farmworker centers in other counties are operated by HCD's Office of Migrant Services (OMS) program through contracts with local housing authorities and counties and provide family-style units that are open 270 days (nine months) each year. No local matching funds are required.

**Funding.** Napa County funds its farmworker centers through a combination of state funds, a local per-acre assessment on affected property owners, and nightly lodging fees, as follows:

- a) AB 317 (Aguiar-Curry), Chapter 469, Statutes of 2017, requires HCD to award up to \$250,000 annually in matching funds to NCHA upon demonstration that NCHA continues to effectively serve the housing needs of Napa's farmworkers. These funds are provided through an agreement between HCD and NCHA. AB 317 requires NCHA to provide equal or greater funds from local sources to receive the funding.
- b) The Napa County Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance in 2002 to form a county service area and, with the approval of the affected property owners, levy an assessment per acre of planted vineyard. Originally capped at \$10 per acre, in 2017, SB 240 (Dodd), Chapter 72, increased the maximum assessment to \$15 per acre. Property owners have continued to reauthorize the assessment, which is now \$14 per acre and generates approximately \$650,000 in annual revenue, representing about 30% of the operating costs of the housing centers.
- c) In addition, lodger rents, currently \$18 per night, contribute just over \$1 million annually, representing approximately 46% of the centers' operating costs.

This bill increases the amount the state provides to the Napa County farmworker centers from \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually. The Napa County Board of Supervisors, sponsor of the bill, explains the increase will "help address rising operating costs and ensure the continued operation of these centers." The board notes the state's annual contribution of \$250,000 initially covered 18% of operating costs but now covers only 11%. The board attributes the decline primarily to increases in food, utilities, and insurance costs.

- 2) **H-2A Visa Program.** The H-2A Visa program is a federal program that allows U.S. employers or U.S. agents who meet specific regulatory requirements to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural jobs. Federal law requires employers utilizing the H-2A program to provide clean and safe housing to H-2A workers at no charge to the employee. According to the county, Napa County farmworker centers do not house H-2A workers. Nonetheless, this bill prohibits centers from providing housing to H-2A workers, and if they do, requires employers to reimburse the state for the cost of the housing.